

3. A telephone apparatus capable of inputting character/symbol data comprising:

telephone network means connected to a handset and terminals connected to a telephone exchange station;

keyboard means having numeral keys each assigned to a plurality of characters/symbols and a mode switching key for switching between a numeral mode and a character/symbol mode, said keyboard means including a key having a switching instruction function which causes preparation for an additional character/symbol to be displayed with the next depression of one of said numeral keys; and
controller means connected to the telephone network means and the keyboard, said controller means for: (1) setting a desired mode as the mode switching key is operated, (2) selecting for entry one of the character/symbols assigned to one of said numeral keys which has been depressed after said mode setting means has been set to the character/symbol mode, (3) changing the character/symbol selected for entry in said function (2) to a different character/symbol associated with the same numeral key in response to each repeated depression of the same numeral key previously depressed, (4) selecting for entry one of the characters/symbols assigned to another of said numeral keys which has been depressed immediately after said one numeral key, and (5) preparing for an additional character/symbol to be entered with the next depression of one of said numeral keys in response to depression of said switching instruction function key when said additional character/symbol is associated with the same one of said numeral keys as the character/symbol just entered.

4. A telephone apparatus capable of inputting characters/symbol data comprising:

telephone network means connected to a handset and terminals connected to a telephone exchange station;

keyboard means having numeral keys each assigned to a plurality of characters/symbols and a mode switching key for switching between a numeral mode and a character/symbol mode, said keyboard means including a single key having a switching instruction function which switches, with each depression, a character/symbol being displayed in a character/symbol mode to a different character/symbol associated with the same numeral key; and
controller means connected to the telephone network means and the keyboard and including memory means for storing keyed in data, said controller means for: (1) setting a desired mode as the mode switching key is operated, (2) selecting for display one of the characters/symbols assigned to one of said numeral keys which has been depressed after the mode setting means has been set to the character/symbol mode, (3) outputting a character/symbol pattern signal representing character/symbol selected, (4) holding in said memory means the character/symbol pattern signal from said outputting function (3), (5) selecting another character/symbol than the character/symbol selected by said selecting function (2), said another character/symbol being assigned to the same key, by operating the same key and then operating said single switching instruction function key, and (6) outputting a character/symbol pattern signal representing said another character/symbol selected and (7) holding in said memory means said character/symbol pattern signal from said outputting function (6); and
display means connected to said controller means, for displaying said outputted character/symbol pattern signals stored in said memory means.

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